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DCI/IC 73-0633/

27 June 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: General Allen

SUBJECT: Interim Report on the DELPHI Technique

1. Mr. Colby asked whether there are any community applications to the DELPHI technique. The simple answer is, "Yes."
2. The DELPHI technique provides a way to focus the knowledge of a sample of individuals and record their "speculation" and "opinions" against specific states or issues. In this context, the technique can help you to sensitize the dynamics of a set of conditions or projected future events in a way that avoids frontal confrontation. It is a technique that also has considerable promise as a diagnostic device.
3. Thus far on the resource front we have tended to rely on trend analysis and have not used DELPHI widely. We have in effect built what the profession calls regression models and typical linear displays of the data as a means of showing trends useful to guiding decisions. (This is the technique which will be used in our upcoming IRAC presentations and with Congress.) I instituted the experimental use of DELPHI in the Agency with the intent to see whether the technique would provide to the Director, PPB, a better way to grapple with the factual relationships, perceptions, and sociological variables in the problem-solving equation we elected to deal with. It did provide a good technique to project the views of a hundred selected people of the Agency on the "future threats" problem. By its use we avoided time-consuming, face-to-face debates and emotional exchanges.
4. We also applied the technique to the formulation of objectives for the DD/O. This permitted recording statistically the intuitive views and inputs of the people playing the game. In this exercise, it was possible to deal with the fundamental processes -- those objectives that really count -- without suffering the same set of

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limitations which characterize other approaches. DELPHI, in my judgment, could provide a possible technique to get at community objectives. Let me elaborate.

5. Under a concept of management by objective, the process, if successful, should involve those who are expected to implement the objectives and to some degree those on whom they impact. The process requires some form of negotiation, i.e., a contract for performance -- and inherently assumes measurable tasks and performance standards. A modified DELPHI can be constructed which would open windows to the perception of the people involved and/or impacted by the DCI objectives and could be employed as part of the preparation in the objectives process next year. I will give this more thought and develop some views in the context of our responsibility for developing planning documents, planning conferences, and the like consistent with the procedures currently before the IRAC Working Group.

6. DELPHI could also be used effectively, I think, as a diagnostic device in the area of career development and morale issues across the community. As you know, we have in mind bringing in a contract person to delve into a range of manpower questions. We may find it useful to establish an approach on selective issues, somewhat like DELPHI, to gather facts and to gain the better views of people's perceptions, the sociological variables present in specific personnel, and morale issues.

7. The most probable and constructive use of DELPHI -- albeit somewhat cumbersome in past practice -- could be its application for gathering judgments and perceptions of consumer needs. This prospect is intriguing and I suspect if done well could reveal a number of counter-intuitive insights. You may recall that some time ago [] DIA, gave considerable attention to the use of these types of techniques in what he termed as an Alpha exercise. It might be useful to see what lessons we learned from the [] experiment and with hindsight ask [] to document what was done about those results.

Note: The [] exercise was a good idea. But [] like so many Systems Analysts, fell in love with his model and was unable to really articulate it in a sensible way to those people who had to use the results. He tried hard in his PR efforts and even made a motion picture of it.

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8. I think we might want to consider using the DELPHI technique in the consumer diagnostic tasks that [redacted] has been assigned. We might discuss this further at our IC planning conference. If we decide to explore the idea, it should be done with much less fanfare and with a much lower sampling base than [redacted] used.

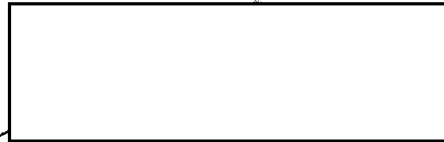
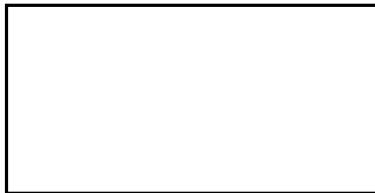
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9. I will explore further some other possible uses of this and similar approaches to a visibility for decision-making. DELPHI is a technique only. Our real purpose in using it on some of the foregoing would be to harness some of the behavioral overlays to our management task. Professional construction of the questions and inferences drawn from answers, such as is done now by the Medical Staff on other matters, would introduce a new dimension of considerable promise.

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

D/DCI/IC

Are there
community applications
for this technique?

WFA

25 JUN 1973

(DATE)

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Remarks: <p>Attached is a copy of the pilot PPB Delphi. This exercise was completed about a year and a half ago and I am most grateful for the additional time to write up the findings.</p> <p>The section on Fitness Reports has generated interest every place we've briefed and continues to interest people. Historically, this study precipitated all the others and we were fortunate to identify our design and measurement problems and correct them in these subsequent exercises.</p> <p>Nadine has one copy for the PPB Archives.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(over)</p>			
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